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homemakers' chat

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U. S. DEPARTMENT
OF AGRICULTURE

Wednesday, May 31, 1944

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Subject: LET THE BOYS AND GIRLS HELP. Information from labor officials of the War Food Administration.

Again this summer Victory Volunteers will move up to the farm front. As soon as schools are out, boys and girls will have a chance to help grow and harvest food crops. To meet the all-time high food production goals set for 1944, farmers need more boys and girls to help this year than last. War Food officials say, for every three boys and girls who helped last year four are needed now.

When the call comes in your community, if you are interested in having your boy or girl join up as a Victory Farm Volunteer, you can get details about when, where, and how to do it from the county agricultural agent or the Extension Service of your State College of Agriculture.

In encouraging your young people to serve as Victory Farm Volunteers, you can be sure they will be looked after. In each locality plans are being developed for adult supervision, proper food, and prompt medical attention if needed. Supervisors will watch the youngsters to see that jobs assigned are not too heavy for their strength and general capacity.

One of the greatest limiting factors in meeting the high food production goals for '44 is the labor to do the work. The mother who encourages the boys and girls in her family to join the Victory Farm Volunteers to grow more food this year will help bring Victory nearer.

To get an idea of what the Victory Farm Volunteer program is and what it attempts to accomplish, let's go over some of the highlights of the 1943 program. Nine hundred thousand boys and girls turned out to help replace farm workers last year and turned in a grand job.

These boys and girls soaked up quantities of healthful sunshine. They

learned new skills that will help them all their lives. They earned money at the rate of wages prevailing in the area where they worked. They saved tons of food their country needed. They developed a sense of responsibility because they felt they were taking the places of older boys and girls in uniform. Also . . . and this is important . . . they had a lot of wholesome fun.

How did they manage for living quarters? Well, some of the boys and girls lived with the farm families they worked for. Others lived in supervised camps and went out to their jobs each day in buses or trucks. Still others worked on peak-season jobs such as picking berries or peaches or apples, but remained at home and traveled out to the job each day.

Reports on the useful work accomplished came from all parts of the country. The State of Virginia had 2600 Victory Farm Volunteers. The majority stuck to their jobs all summer, and were very satisfactory to the farmers who hired them. When time came to go back to school, many of the boys and girls were already signed up by farmers who wanted to make sure of their services another summer.

Under the blue skies and the blazing sun of New Mexico, three thousand boys and girls worked on farms. "These kids saved our crops," the New Mexico farmers said, "and we want them back next year." You may have enjoyed more baked potatoes the past few months because of the farm work of boys and girls. In Idaho, famous for its potatoes the people have a long-established practice of closing the schools for a few weeks during potato harvest time in the Fall. Last year more youngsters joined in than ever before, and the Idaho agricultural authorities say these young people harvested half of the 45-million-bushel potato crop. Much the same story came from the great potato-growing State of Maine.

Down in Smith County, Texas, boys and girls joined their elders and made it possible for growers, buyers, and canners to save a 4-million-dollar berry crop to add to the Nation's food supply. In California, 35,000 boys and girls pitched in and helped to save the grapes, the most valuable crop in the State last year--

worth over a hundred million dollars. In Nebraska, boys and girls detasseled 3,000 acres of hybrid corn worth \$750,000.

In Utah, sugar beets are an important crop. Youngsters worked on 18,000 acres thinning and hoeing the beets and helping harvest them. In Oregon snap beans were a big job on which the boys and girls helped save the day. The Oregon bean crop was worth a tidy sum--\$3,000,000.

Now, how did the parents of the children feel about their youngsters joining up as Victory Farm Volunteers and the general effect on them. Here are some of the main points covered by mothers in their comments. Youngsters gain weight. They developed a knowledge and appreciation of Nature that will enrich their lives in many ways. They learned a lot about getting along with people and teamwork generally that will help them when they go into the world on their own. They gained valuable work skills, and developed resourcefulness. They were kept off the streets. They worked in a healthful atmosphere that improved them mentally and physically.

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